



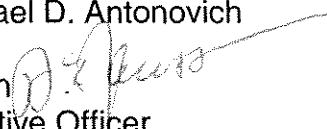
# County of Los Angeles CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

713 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012  
(213) 974-1101  
<http://cao.co.la.ca.us>

DAVID E. JANSSEN  
Chief Administrative Officer

July 1, 2004

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen   
Chief Administrative Officer

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

## **VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR DISABLED CITIZENS**

On November 25, 2003, on a motion by Supervisor Antonovich, your Board instructed the Chief Administrative Office, Office of Emergency Management (OEM), in consultation with the Sheriff and the Fire Chief, to work with the Commission on Disabilities, and the departments of Community and Senior Services and Public Social Services, to determine the feasibility of establishing a voluntary registration system for disabled citizens. The system could potentially provide critical information and evacuation notifications to disabled citizens during emergency incidents and natural disasters. We have concluded our study and have determined that while the idea is good, it is not feasible at this time for the County to implement such a system.

OEM established an ad hoc committee comprised of the departments listed above to identify issues and review information on available communications systems. The committee determined that two primary questions must be answered in order to complete this assignment and make recommendations to your board: 1) Does the disabled community support development of a voluntary registration system that identifies them in order for government to provide them with alerts and warnings and, if yes, what should be the scope of the system; and 2) Does technology exist that can communicate rapidly with potentially a million or more registrants and, if yes, what would it cost.

The ad hoc committee has met on a number of occasions to discuss issues and review information from communications system providers. To better address the questions, the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance (OAAC) was invited to join the committee. The committee also invited input from the UCLA Advanced Policy Institute-Living Independently in Los Angeles (LILA). We also met with the Commission on Disabilities to solicit their advice.

The Commission likes the concept of a notification system; however, some members suggested that it would be a difficult task to accomplish. They expressed concern for the protection of individuals' privacy. The commissioners felt that, to be effective, such a system would have to serve all cities and unincorporated areas within the County.

We question whether such a system is feasible due to the size and political complexity of Los Angeles County. The system will require that many public safety agencies throughout the County agree to use the system for notifications. To be effective, these notifications must be made immediately after a threat is identified. Maintaining the system would require at least fourteen full-time staff for Los Angeles County to ensure that rosters of people who wish to be identified are kept up-to-date. (The system would require voluntary registration, in order to comply with privacy concerns.)

Currently, emergency notifications are made using the public news media, and the level of cooperation between public safety agencies and the news media is excellent. We use several methods of disseminating emergency alerts to the news media which allow nearly instant notifications. We believe we can do a better job of educating people with disabilities about our use of the news media to provide these notifications, and the importance of monitoring news media during an emergency.

OEM staff surveyed counties and cities where a community notification system exists. The survey asked for the jurisdiction's population, what number of staff was required to establish and maintain the system, who manages the system, and how the privacy concerns of registrants are handled. Of these, we found only one county with a system in place; others are conducting research on this matter. The referenced county has a population of approximately 1,000,000 and used three full-time staff to establish and maintain its system.

In Los Angeles County, the Sheriff's Department is responsible for alerting and notifying the public of imminent danger that requires they take protective action. There are 40 cities serviced by the Sheriff, and 48 cities that either have their own, or contract services with other police departments. We believe that the County's population of approximately 10 million would require at least fourteen staff (ten analysts, two EDP analysts to do GIS mapping, and two clerical support) to establish and maintain a viable notification system. We estimate the costs to be \$952,506 annually for staff, and maintenance cost of \$426,596 for the technology, for the first three years, covering hardware, and training. If your Board determined an interest in pursuing this project, it would also be necessary to determine which department would be given responsibility to establish and maintain this notification program. Additional costs, such as office space, supplies, utilities, computers, etc., would also need to be calculated.

As a result of this Board motion, OEM reviewed our educational materials, with focused messages for people with disabilities, and found that we can do a better job. We will work with the Commission on Disabilities to develop a special Emergency Survival Program (ESP) campaign targeting people with disabilities, people who provide personal assistance, and the agencies that provide services to people with disabilities. We will produce specially targeted bulletins and tip sheets, and will establish a special dissemination program to ensure that we reach the widest possible audience. This will include educational materials about how to get information during an emergency and will address special issues related to evacuations for people with disabilities.

Based upon the extensive research conducted by the committee, we conclude that it would not be feasible for the County to implement a voluntary registration system for disabled citizens at this time.

DEJ:CP  
GB:cm

c: Sheriff  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Director of Affirmative Action Compliance  
Director of Community and Senior Services  
Fire Chief  
Director of Public Social Services  
Emergency Management Council  
Contact, Commission on Disabilities  
UCLA Advanced Policy Institute-LILA, Project Director